

CLAIM LISTING

1. (currently amended) A method of reducing pathogens in a mammal's blood stream by exposing the blood in a extracorporeal fluid with nitric oxide, comprising:

(a) providing an extracorporeal blood circuit comprising an inlet line adapted to receive blood from a patient or a blood source, an outlet line adapted to return blood to the patient and/or the blood source, a fluid circuit for fluid communication between the inlet and the outlet line, and at least one pump acting on the fluid circuit to circulate blood therethrough and out the outlet line,

(b) circulating the blood through the extracorporeal blood circuit, and

(c) exposing the blood in the circuit with nitric oxide gas in a concentration sufficient to reduce pathogenic content in the blood; and

(d) providing a free-radical scavenger unit that exposes the blood to free-radical scavengers after the blood is exposed to the nitric oxide.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising including in the circuit a blood treatment component, treating blood with the component, and at least upstream of the component contacting blood in a portion of said circuit with nitric oxide gas in concentration sufficient to reduce pathogenic content in the blood.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 further comprising selecting said component from the group consisting of a dialysis component, an organ perfusion component, a heat exchange component, an oxygenation component, or a combination thereof.

4. (previously withdrawn) A method of reducing pathogens in blood in an extracorporeal fluid circuit of a cardiopulmonary bypass apparatus, comprising:

providing a cardiopulmonary bypass circuit that includes an inlet line adapted to receive blood from a patient or a blood source and an outlet line adapted to return blood to the patient and/or blood source, a reservoir connected to the inlet line for accumulation of blood received from the patient, an oxygenator, a fluid interconnection circuit for fluid communication between the reservoir and the oxygenator and between the oxygenator and the outlet line, and at least one pump acting on the fluid interconnection circuit to withdraw blood from the reservoir and circulate it through the oxygenator and out the outlet line, and

exposing the blood in a portion of the cardiopulmonary bypass circuit with nitric oxide gas in concentration sufficient to reduce pathogens in the blood.

5. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 further comprising:
monitoring the rate of flow of blood through the cardiopulmonary bypass circuit,
introducing nitric oxide gas into the circuit, and
controlling the pressure and rate of flow of gas introduced into the circuit in relation to the flow of blood through the circuit to maintain the concentration of nitric oxide within a desired range sufficient to reduce pathogens of the blood.
6. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 comprising introducing nitric oxide into a blood accumulator reservoir receiving blood from the patient for exposing with the blood.
7. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 comprising:
locating a semipermeable membrane selectively permeable to nitric oxide gas and impermeable to nitrogen gas in a portion of said fluid interconnection circuit distally proximate the reservoir in a longitudinal disposition adapted to allow contact of an outside of the membrane with blood flowing through the fluid interconnection circuit portion, and
delivering nitric oxide gas to the inside of the membrane under pressure sufficient to drive the nitric oxide across the membrane for contact with blood on the outside of the membrane within a desired concentration range sufficient to reduce pathogens in the blood.
8. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 7 further comprising:
providing the membrane in tubular form having an inlet and outlet and in coaxial disposition within the fluid interconnection circuit portion,
delivering the nitric oxide with a nitrogen carrier gas through the inlet and removing gas through the outlet sufficient to maintain the pressure and rate of flow, and
scavenging any nitric oxide present in the gas removed through the membrane outlet.
9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the pathogens are septicemia and/or bacteremia.
10. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 wherein the pathogens are septicemia and/or bacteremia.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the nitric oxide gas is mixed with other gases.
12. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 wherein the nitric oxide gas is mixed with other gases.
13. (canceled) The method of claim 1 further providing a free-radical scavenger unit that exposes the blood to free-radical scavengers after the blood is exposed to the nitric oxide.
14. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 4 further providing a free-radical scavenger unit that exposes the blood to free-radical scavengers after the blood is exposed to the nitric oxide.
15. (currently amended) An extracorporeal blood circuit comprising an inlet line adapted to receive blood from a patient or a blood source, an outlet line adapted to return blood to the patient and/or the blood source, a fluid circuit for fluid communication between the inlet and the outlet line, and at least one pump acting on the fluid circuit to circulate blood therethrough and out the outlet line; and

a nitric oxide unit that exposes the blood in the circuit with nitric oxide gas in a concentration sufficient to reduce pathogenic content in the blood; and

a free-radical scavenger unit that exposes the blood in the circuit, after being exposed to nitric oxide gas, with a free-radical scavenger in a concentration sufficient to reduce the nitric oxide content in the blood.

16. (previously withdrawn) A nitric oxide gas dispenser for mammals, comprising:
a component that provides nitric oxide gas and or aerosolized composition at a desired pressure and concentration, and a delivery system that provides the nitric oxide at the desired pressure to the mammal;

a valve mechanism that controls the flow of the nitric oxide so that mammal's lungs receive a predetermined amount of nitric oxide and the nitric oxide is of sufficient quantity that it is able to penetrate through the mammal's lungs to contact the mammal's blood cells to reduce the pathogens in the mammal's blood and not form excessive amounts of methemoglobin.

17. (previously withdrawn) The dispenser of claim 16 wherein the dispenser has a pressure sensor positioned along the delivery system and determines when the mammal is taking a breadth;

if the pressure sensor determines the mammal is taking a breadth, the pressure sensor transmits a breadth signal to a microprocessor, the microprocessor then determines if the mammal is within a prescribed time frame for the mammal to be administered nitric oxide;

if the microprocessor determines the mammal is within the prescribed time frame, the microprocessor transmits an open signal to the valve mechanism to release the predetermined amount of nitric oxide to the mammal to reduce pathogens in the blood system.

18. (previously withdrawn) The dispenser of claim 16 wherein the nitric oxide is transmitted into at least one nostril of the mammal, or the mouth of the mammal, or through a ventilator.

19. (previously withdrawn) The dispenser of claim 16 wherein the pathogens are septicemia and/or bacteremia.

20. (previously withdrawn) The dispenser of claim 16 wherein the nitric oxide is mixed with other gases.

21. (previously withdrawn) A method of reducing pathogens in a mammal's blood stream by exposing the blood that receives oxygen from the lungs with nitric oxide, comprising:

(a) administering nitric oxide from a nitric oxide dispenser unit to a mammal through a nasal canula, a mask or a ventilator circuit for a mammal breathing or on ventilator like support;

(b) exposing the blood in contact with the patient's lungs with nitric oxide in a concentration sufficient to reducer pathogenic content in the blood.

22. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the pathogens are septicemia and/or bacteremia.

23. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the nitric oxide is a gas.

24. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the nitric oxide is delivered through an aerosolized donor compounds.

25. (previously withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the nitric oxide is mixed with other gases.
26. (canceled) The device of claim 15, further comprising a free-radical scavenger unit that exposes the blood in the circuit, after being exposed to nitric oxide gas, with a free-radical scavenger in a concentration sufficient to reduce the nitric oxide content in the blood.